

For the rest of us, there are other issues of equal moral heft that we ought to be considering before we move to the estate tax issue. I hope we get a chance to during the course of this session. It is important during the course of this budget debate that we talk about issues that mean something to families, small businesses, and family farmers across America.

Mr. DORGAN. Will the Senator yield for one additional question?

Mr. DURBIN. I will yield.

Mr. DORGAN. I indicated to the Senator from Nevada that if there is to be a vote on the estate tax issue in the coming days—and I guess it may be with respect to the tax provisions dealing with the energy bill, I will want the opportunity to offer a second-degree amendment or at least offer essentially the same amendment we considered last year, and that amendment will draw a distinction. The distinction is this: If my amendment is adopted, then effective in 2003, no transfer or passage of any family business or family farm, regardless of size, to qualified heirs will have an estate tax obligation attached to it. None. It will be completely exempt next year.

There is nothing under the minority party's proposal that would immediately exempt family businesses from the estate tax. It will be another 7 years or so before they are totally exempt.

My amendment says, yes, let's exempt them, and do it immediately. My amendment also provides for a higher threshold exemption on all other estates. And I do not intend to agree to an unanimous consent agreement on this issue unless I have an opportunity to offer that as an amendment as well.

Warren Buffett has been here a couple of times in the last year or so to visit with us. He is the world's second richest man. He said to us: What can people be thinking about, getting rid of the estate tax? I do not support getting rid of the estate tax. This is the world's second richest man. He said you ought not do that; it does not make any sense.

Bill Gates' father came to Congress and said: Don't get rid of the estate tax completely. There are people who have billions of dollars who ought to pay some basic estate tax because they have never paid taxes on those assets, and that is the majority of those assets for the largest estates.

When they pass, obviously a significant part ought to go to their heirs, but a significant part ought to be available to invest back into this country's future, especially education, health care, and other critical areas.

I think the proper way to deal with this issue is to recognize there is merit to the question of whether we want to interrupt the transfer of a family business to other family members. The answer from us is, no, we should not interrupt that transfer. If mom and dad want to pass the business along to the kids to run, I do not care how big the

business, let's not saddle them with an estate tax obligation.

The fact is, the amendment I offered last year would have exempted all of them completely next year. We can do that. I would like an opportunity to vote on that again, if we are going to vote on exempting all estates forever from the estate tax. I think we ought to have a vote on the amendment I offered last year.

I thank the Senator for yielding.

Mr. DURBIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 6 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### DR. RUDOLFO ANAYA'S NATIONAL MEDAL OF ARTS AWARD

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I speak briefly today to recognize one of my State's greatest citizens—an extraordinary author whose contributions to the arts have made him known as the father of modern Chicano literature. Today Dr. Rudolfo Anaya will be 1 of 14 distinguished artists to receive this year's National Medal of Arts.

Dr. Anaya is a legend in New Mexico and throughout the Nation for writings that reflect the cultural crossings unique to the Southwest. Born in the small town of Pastura, NM, he grew up in a Spanish-speaking home rich with tradition. His family moved to Albuquerque when he was 15, where he attended high school.

His first novel, "Bless Me, Ultima," was published in 1972 and won him the prestigious Premio Quinto Sol national award for Chicano literature. This widely-acclaimed novel brought many Hispanic traditions into the limelight, creating a colorful narrative spiced with Spanish vocabulary. "Bless Me, Ultima" continues to be a best-selling Chicano work, and is used in classrooms throughout the world as a standard text for Chicano studies and literature courses.

Dr. Anaya's work combines history and tradition with the supernatural. Old Spain and New Spain, Mexico, and Mesoamerica, all come together in a style that Newsweek has referred to as "the new American writing." his second novel, "Heart of Aztlan," explores a Mexican-American family's struggle with discrimination and poverty and its determination to preserve a proud sense of cultural identity. Such themes recognize a harsh reality, while also presenting the richness of Hispanic and Native American traditions and ceremonies that are so fundamental to New Mexican culture.

Other works by Dr. Anaya include "Zia Summer," "Rio Grande Fall," "Jalanta," "Torguga," "Anaya Reader," "Albuquerque," and his most recent mystery novel, "Shaman Winter." He has also written numerous short

stories, essays, and children's books, including "Farolitos for Abuelo" and "The Farolitos of Christmas." Other distinguished awards include the PEN Center West Award for Fiction, the Before Columbus American Book Award, and the Excellence in the Humanities Award.

Dr. Anaya is a professor emeritus of English at the University of New Mexico, where he began teaching in the summer of 1974. That same year he served on the board of Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines. Both Dr. Anaya's teaching and his work build an interest and pride in New Mexican history. His unique story-telling abilities stem from the oral tradition he experienced growing up, and his desire to pass these stories down to children make him an author, a storyteller, an educator, and a role model.

As our Nation continues to explore ways to better educate our children and increase cultural awareness, we must look to role models like Dr. Anaya for guidance. His writings continue to inspire people of all ages, from all ethnic backgrounds. He has not only brought a rich tradition of story-telling and folklore to bookshelves all over the world, but he has also utilized his tremendous gift to portray the Hispanic experience. He inspires young writers to share their gifts, and he provides given millions of readers, including myself, incredible joy.

The state of New Mexico is proud to be home to such an esteemed artist—one who has brought the Southwest to the forefront of American literature. I am truly honored to congratulate Dr. Anaya for all of his accomplishments for for the distinguished National Medal of Arts award that the President will present to him this afternoon in Constitution Hall. His hard work has earned him our utmost respect and admiration. I would like to thank him personally for his outstanding contributions to the arts in America.

#### THE ENERGY BILL

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I will say a few words about where we find ourselves. I know we are in morning business, and that is appropriate for the various statements that have been made, but this is the beginning of week 6 in which the Senate is considering energy legislation. We are fast approaching a decisive point in that debate: Will we be able to bring this bill to an orderly close this week or will we not?

We tried before to get a finite list of amendments agreed to, and there were objections raised by some in the Senate so we were not able to do that. We also could not get any agreement, at least as yet, on tax provisions. So the majority leader has filed for cloture on the bill, and all first-degree amendments have now been submitted. That deadline was 1:30 today.

I hope we are able to deal with the remaining amendments and move forward. I hope we are able to invoke cloture so we can bring this very large